

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T MONROVIA 4411

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E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: CF, XA, XJ, LI
SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA POLICY: SHABA, SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT

REF: STATE 153145

1. THE EMBASSY WELCOMES DEPARTMENT'S DECISION TO WIDEN TO THE FIELD CONSIDERATION OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S THOUGHTFUL AND INNOVATIVE CABLE. OUR INITIAL REACTION TO AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S THOUGHTS ARE THREEFOLD.

2. FIRST, THE U.S., AT LEAST AS SEEN FROM THE LIBERIAN STANDPOINT, HAS TAKEN AN IMPORTANT, POSITIVE STEP IN FACING DOWN THE SOVIETS/CUBANS IN SHABA. PRESIDENT TOLBERT LONG HAS BEEN URGING ON THE WEST THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO COME HELP THE MODERATES. SO, ONE OF OUR FIRST TASKS IS TO SEE THE SHABA SITUATION THROUGH. NOW THAT MODERATE AFRICANS HAVE TAKEN OVER FROM THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS IN SHABA, WE MUST STAND BEHIND THEM. FROM OUR LIMITED VANTAGE POINT AT LEAST, IT IS NOT RPT NOT CLEAR HOW THE PRESENT SITUATION WILL EVOLVE OR HOW WE CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT SITUATION TO PROMOTE SOLUTION OF THE ZAIRE/ANGOLA PROBLEM. BUT, WHATEVER, WE MUST REMAIN PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROCESS; THE MODERATES WILL NEED OUR GUIDANCE AND OUR SUPPORT. WE MUST HELP ZAIRE

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GET ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER FOR, ULTIMATELY, IT IS ZAIRE THAT MUST TBE ABLE TO STAND UP TO ANGOLA/CUBA-SUPPORTED KATANGANS. WHAT WE MUST ASSURE, IT SEEMS TO US, IS THAT ANY NEW CONSULTATIVE PROCESS NOT RPT NOT MISLEAD THE AFRICANS INTO THINKING WE ARE LOSING THE RESOLVE WE SHOWED IN BOTH SHABA ONE AND SHABA TWO TO SEND THE SOVIETS THE MESSAGE THAT "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH".

3. SECOND, THE MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING AFRICA, THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES, ARE ONES THE WEST MUST REMAIN PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR SOLVING IF SOLUTIONS ARE TO BE PEACEFUL. CERTAINLY THAT IS THE WAY AFRICANS SEE IT AND ANY CONSULTATIVE PROCESS THAT ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCE THE AFRICANS OF THEIR OWN RIGHTFUL RESPONSIBILITIES WILL FAIL IF WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE OUR RESPONSIBILITY CONCERNING THE ISSUES WHICH ONLY WE CAN REALLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT AND WHICH ARE, AT LEAST IN PART, RESPONSIBLE FOR SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA AND FOR THE POTENTIAL THAT THIS PRESENCE WILL GROW RATHER DIMINISH.

4. THIRD, WE MUST BE CAREFUL THAT ANY APPROACH TO THE AFRICANS ALONG THE LINES PROPOSED BY AMBASSADOR YOUNG NOT APPEAR PREACHY OR CONDESCENDING. AFRICANS ARE SENSITIVE TO ANY APPROACH THAT SMACKS OF TELLING THEM WHAT IS GOOD FOR THEM. (CERTAINLY AFRICANS WOULD DOUBTLESS RESENT TAKING FULL BLAME FOR THE SOVIET/CUBAN MILITARY ROLE IN AFRICA.) FOR THIS EMBASSY, ONE OF THE RECENT POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN USG POLICY TOWARD AFRICA HAS BEEN A NEW WILLINGNESS AND EFFORT ON OUR PART TO INITIATE DIALOGUE WITH AFRICANS TO TURN TO THEM FOR ADVICE, TO LISTEN TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY, AND TO ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CONCERNS.

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5. AS FOR APPROACH, WE MIGHT CONSIDER AN INITIAL SELECTIVE SOUNDING COUCHED IN TERMS "DO THE AFRICANS THEMSELVES PERCEIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING AS AN URGENT ISSUE FOR KHARTOUM AND, IF SO, ARE THERE WAYS WE MAY BE HELPFUL?" AS FOR WHOM TO APPROACH, WE WOULD SUGGEST ADDING THOSE LEADERS WHO HAVE NOW LAID THEIR OWN CONCERNS ON THE LINE BY SENDING MILITARY PERSONNEL TO SHABA. PAROCHIALITY, TOLBERT (ALTHOUGH HE IS OUT OF THE COUNTRY UNTIL JUNE 30) WOULD APPEAR A NATURAL FOR HIS OWN WESTERN ORIENTATION AND HIS UPCOMING CHAIRMANSHIP (1979) OF THE OAU.
HORAN

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